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REMARKS

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DEC 22 2006I. INTRODUCTION

Claims 1-5, 10-19, 26-32 and 34 are pending, claims 6-9, 20-25 and 33 having been canceled without prejudice herein. Claims 1, 3, 13, 15, 18, 26, 28, 30 and 34 have been amended.

II. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 3, 6, 15, 18, 28 and 34 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd paragraph

Claims 3, 6, 15, 18, 28 and 34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite. In particular, the Examiner objects to the term "or less" as being "unclear and incorrect" on the grounds that "[s]trictly speaking negative velocity or acceleration does not exist. It may have a component in an opposite direction but the velocity itself is not negative." To clarify what Applicants mean by "substantially zero or less", Applicants have amended the relevant claims to read "substantially zero or zero" (e.g., "zero" may be less than "substantially zero"). The claim amendments are not intended to narrow the scope of the claims.

III. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1-6, 10-19, 26-32 and 34 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 1-6, 10-19, 26-32 and 34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,699,329 to Mueller et al. (hereinafter 'Mueller'). In response thereto Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 13, 26 and 30 to require that during unloading, a substrate carrier is contacted with substantially zero

6900/Y01/SYNX/SYNX/JW

velocity or zero velocity in a vertical direction as the substrate carrier is transported by a conveyor.

As stated in Applicants' specification:

"Substantially zero velocity" or "substantially zero acceleration" mean sufficiently close to zero so that a substrate carrier may be unloaded from and/or loaded onto a moving conveyor and/or carrier engagement member without damaging a substrate contained within the substrate carrier and/or generating potentially damaging particles. For example, a substrate carrier may be contacted with a relatively small velocity. In one embodiment, an end effector may raise vertically rapidly, and then slow down to a relatively small or substantially zero velocity prior to contacting a substrate carrier. A similar small (or substantially zero) acceleration also may be employed.

(Specification, pg. 51, ln. 1 to pg. 52, ln. 26, bold emphasis added).

Mueller does not appear to disclose such a feature. As such, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-6, 10-19, 26-32 and 34 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

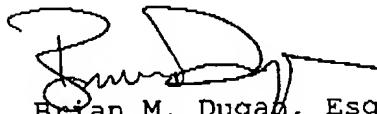
IV. CONCLUSION

The Applicants believe the claims are in condition for allowance, and respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the same. The Applicants have filed herewith an appropriate Petition for Extension of Time along with authorization to charge the requisite fee to make this response timely. If any additional fees are required, please

6900/Y01/SYNX/SYNX/JW

charge Deposit Account No. **04-1696**. The Applicants encourage the Examiner to telephone the Applicants' attorney should any issues remain.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Tarrytown, New York